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General George Washington's Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati

By MAJOR EDGAR ERSKINE HUME, U. S. Army,

President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia and Assistant Secretary General.

1783

Reprinted from The Numismatist, Vol. XLVI, No. 12, December, 1933, pages 749-759.

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FROM THE MEDIA & EMBLEM COMMITTEE
OF
CANNON CHAPTER

1783

Reprinted from The Numismatist, Vol. XLVI, No. 12, December, 1933,
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HUME, EDGAR ERSKINE, 1889-

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Author's autograph copy.

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General George Washington's Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati

A History and Description of the Most Valuable Relic of Washington in Existence.

By MAJOR EDGAR ERSKINE HUME, M. C., U. S. Army,
Assistant Secretary General of the Society of the Cincinnati and President of the Society in the State of Virginia.

The Society of the Cincinnati was instituted on May 10, 1783, at Newburgh-on-the-Hudson, New York. American independence had been achieved and the officers of the Continental Army were about to separate. Desiring to form a society to perpetuate the friendships which had been forged in the fires of eight years of war, and to be prepared to render assistance to the members or their families who might be in need, they founded what is the oldest military society in the country.

The name of the Society was taken from that of the illustrious Roman general, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, who, at the call of country, left his farm and led the armies of Rome to victory, and when that victory had been won returned again to his plough, refusing the honors proffered him by a grateful Senate—the ideal of Roman simplicity and a model to his countrymen.

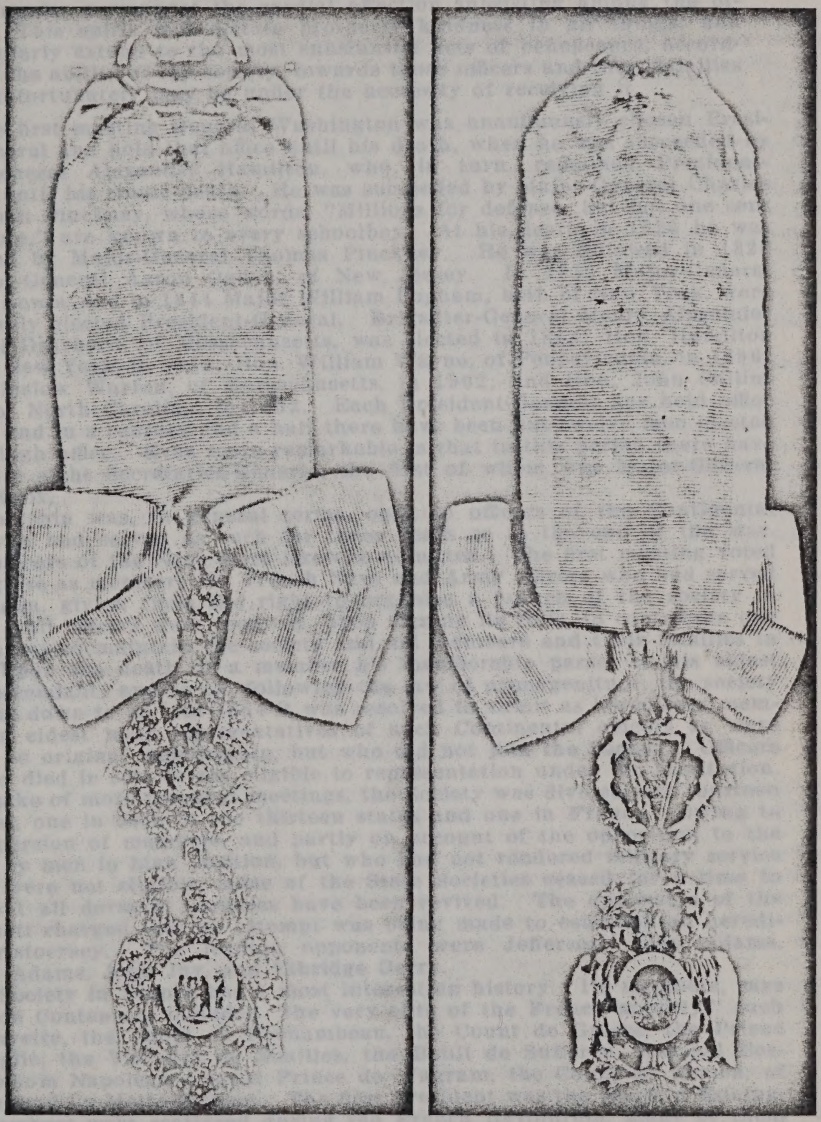
The remarkable document known as the **Institution** of the Cincinnati oegins with these words:

> It having pleased the Supreme Governor of the Universe, in the disposition of human affairs, to cause the separation of the colonies of North America from domination of Great Britain, and, after a bloody conflict of eight years, to establish them free, independent, and sovereign states, connected, by alliances founded on reciprocal advantage, with some of the greatest princes and powers of the earth;
>
> To perpetuate, therefore, as well the remembrance of this vast event, as the mutual friendships which have been formed under the pressure of common danger, and, in many instances, cemented by the blood of the parties, the officers of the American army do, hereby, in the most solemn manner, associate, constitute, and combine themselves into one society of friends, to endure as long as they shall endure, or any of their eldest male posterity, and, in failure thereof, the collateral branches who may be judged worthy of becoming its supporters and members.

The following extract from the Institution clearly shows the objects of the Cincinnati, and is read at every meeting:

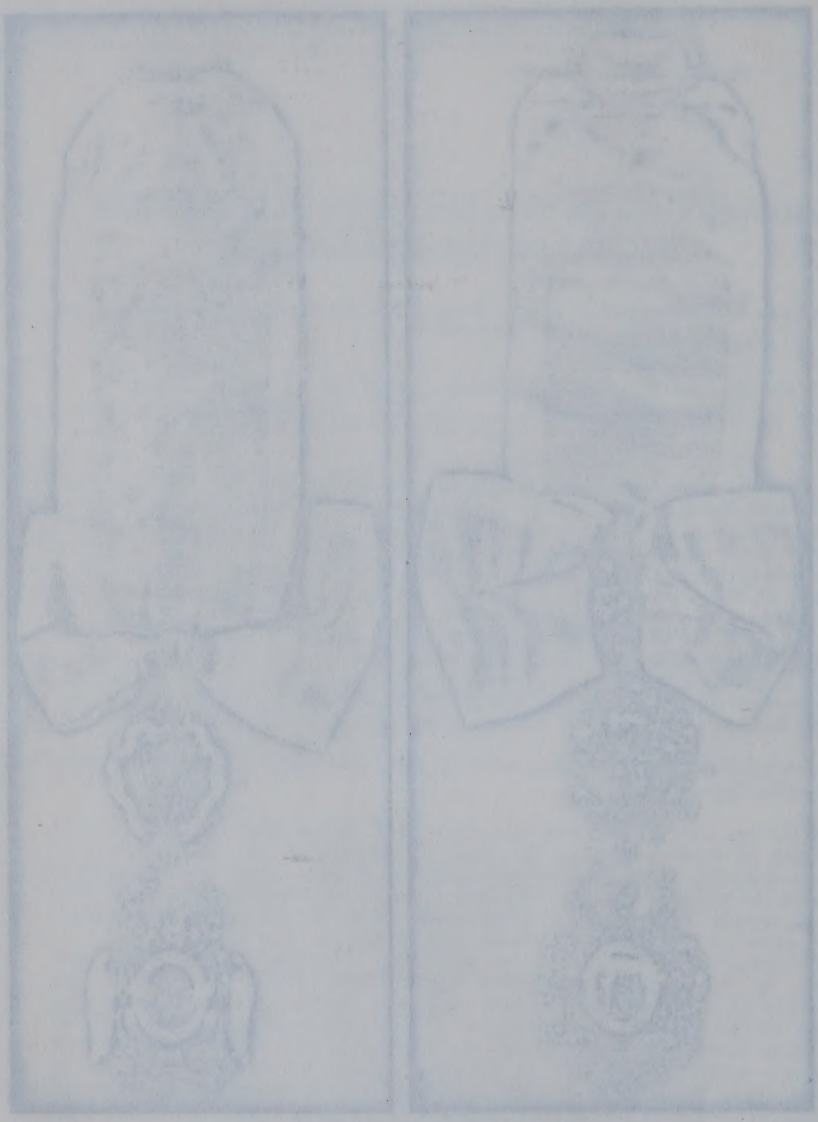
> The following principles shall be immutable, and form the basis of the Society of the Cincinnati:
>
> An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which they have fought and bled, and

Gift '46
Polish Roman Catholic Union
Chicago



Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati in Diamonds.

Presented to General Washington in 1784 by officers of the French Navy. Since worn by Alexander Hamilton, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and the other nine Presidents General of the Society. Probably the most valuable relic of Washington in existence. (Now the property of the Society.)



without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.

An unalterable determination to promote and cherish, between the respective states, that union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American empire.

To render permanent the cordial affection subsisting among the officers: This spirit will dictate brotherly kindness in all things, and particularly extend to the most substantial acts of beneficence, according to the ability of the society, towards those officers and their families who unfortunately may be under the necessity of receiving it.

At the first meeting General Washington was unanimously chosen President-General and held that office until his death, when he was succeeded by Major-General Alexander Hamilton, who, in turn, remained President-General until his tragic death. He was succeeded by Major-General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, whose words, "Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute," are known to every schoolboy. At his death in 1825 he was succeeded by Major-General Thomas Pinckney. He was followed in 1829 by Major-General Aaron Ogden, of New Jersey. In 1839 Major-General Morgan Lewis, and in 1844 Major William Popham, both of New York, were successively elected President-General. Brigadier-General Henry Alexander Scammel Dearborn, of Massachusetts, was elected in 1848; Hon. Hamilton Fish, of New York, in 1854; Hon. William Wayne, of Pennsylvania, in 1896; Hon. Winslow Warren, of Massachusetts, in 1902; and Hon. John Collins Daves, of North Carolina, in 1932. Each President-General has held office for life, and in a century and a half there have been but twelve men elected to that high office. Even more remarkable is that in this period there have been only eight Secretaries-General, the first of whom was Major-General Henry Knox.

Membership was, in general terms, open to officers of the Continental Army who had served as such for three years or to the end of the war. Later, officers of the Navy were likewise admitted. The first meeting voted to recognize as members the French Navy and Army officers who had served in America, giving them the right to organize a branch of the society in France. All officers were required, upon signing its rolls, to contribute one month's pay to maintain the society and aid members and their families in need. Upon the death of a member his membership passes to his eldest male descendant; and so on, following the law of primogeniture, the society has come down to us. In 1854 it was resolved to admit as hereditary members the eldest male representatives of such Continental officers as were eligible to original membership, but who did not join the Society. Officers who had died in service are eligible to representation under the Institution.

For sake of more frequent meetings, the Society was divided into fourteen branches, one in each of the thirteen states and one in France. Owing to the dispersion of members, and partly on account of the opposition to the society by men in high position, but who had not rendered military service and so were not eligible, some of the State Societies ceased for a time to exist, but all dormant societies have been revived. The opponents of the Cincinnati charged that an attempt was being made to establish an hereditary aristocracy. The leading opponents were Jefferson, John Adams, Samuel Adams, John Jay, and Elbridge Gerry.

The Society in France has a most interesting history. Its members, says Baron de Contenson, included "the very elite of the French nobility," such as Lafayette, the Count de Rochambeau, the Count de Grasse, the Prince de Broglie, the Viscount de Noailles, the Bailli de Sufferen, Marshal Berthier, whom Napolean created Prince de Wagram, the Count de Fersen, of Sweden, and La Motte-Picquet. The first President was the Count d'Estaing. The members were scattered during the French Revolution, many of them perishing on the guillotine. While a number of hereditary members were admitted to the State societies in the United States in the intervening years, the Society was not formally readmitted to full standing until 1926.

Among the great leaders of our Revolution who were members of the Cincinnati there may be mentioned, besides Washington himself, Hamilton, Lafayette, Knox, Greene, Steuben, Benjamin Lincoln, Pinckney, John Paul Jones, McDougall, Putnam, Schuyler, Gates, President Monroe, Moultrie, Kosciuszko, Anthony Wayne, Sullivan, Muhlenberg, Weedon, "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and St. Clair. President Pierce was an hereditary member.

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Major-General Arthur St. Clair, President of the Society of the Cincinnati in Pennsylvania, was Governor of the Northwest Territory, in which a great number of the members of the Cincinnati took up lands granted them for Revolutionary services. General St. Clair changed the name of the chief town, **Losantiville,** to **Cincinnati,** in honor of the Society. This is the origin of the name of the city of Cincinnati, Ohio.

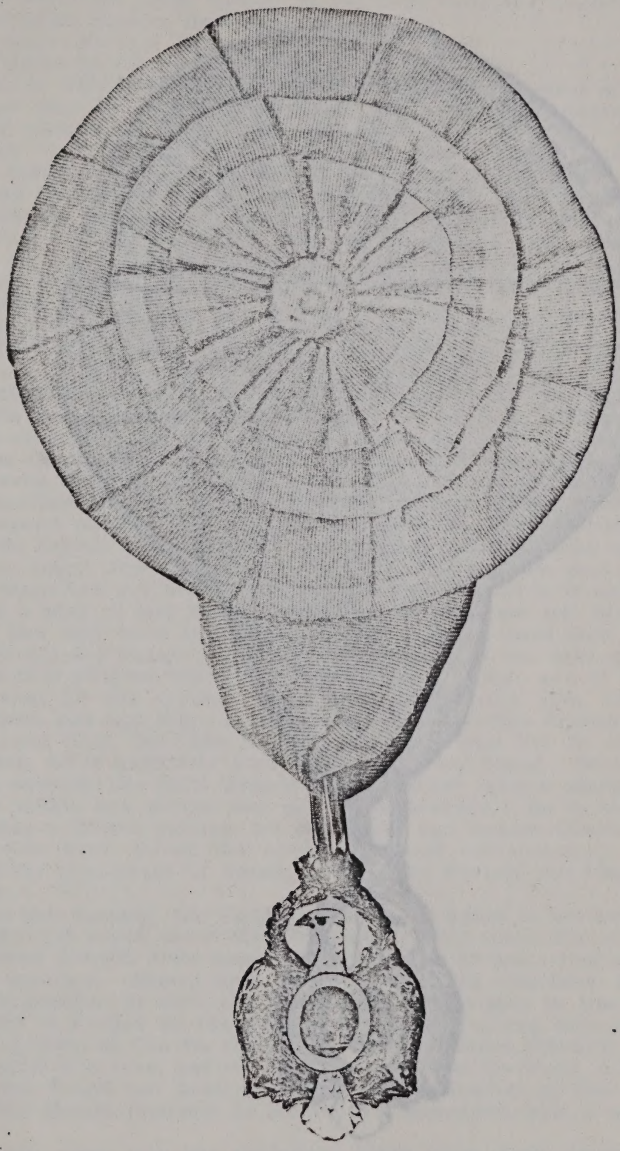
The Institution provided for the admission of a limited number of honorary members, men whose services and ideals were similar to those of the Cincinnati. Under this provision some of the most noted men of this and other countries have been elected to honorary membership, including Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, Paca, Perry, Bainbridge, Winfield Scott, Webster, Grant, Sherman, Farragut, Cleveland, Dewey, Jusserand, Schofield, Benjamin Harrison, McKinley, President Loubet of France, Chaffee, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Woodrow Wilson, His Majesty Albert, King of the Belgians, Foch, Joffre, Pétain, Newton Baker, Leonard Wood, Pershing, and March. The most recent addition to this illustrious roll is the name of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the fifteenth President of the United States to wear the Eagle. President Taylor was an honorary member, but would probably have been an hereditary member had not the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia been dormant at the time, for he was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Taylor, of the Second Virginia Regiment, Continental Line, an original member of the Cincinnati.

At the meeting on May 10, 1783, the following resolution was adopted:

> The Society shall have an Order, by which its members shall be known and distinguished, which shall be a medal of gold, of a proper size to receive the emblems, and suspended by a deep blue ribbon, two inches wide, edged with white, descriptive of the Union of America and France.
>
> The principal figure, Cincinnatus—three Senators presenting him with a sword and other military ensigns. On a field in the background, his wife standing at the door of their cottage; near it a plough and instruments of husbandry. Around the whole,
>
> **Omnia Reliquit Servare Rempublicam**
>
> On the reverse, sun rising, a city with open gates and vessels entering the port. Fame crowning Cincinnatus with a wreath, inscribed **Virtutis Præmium.** Below, hands joined supporting a heart, with the motto **Esto Perpetua.** Around the whole,
>
> **Societas Cincinnatorum Instituta A D 1783**

The distinguished French engineer, Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, of the Continental Corps of Engineers, who was later to plan the city of Washington, was requested, as a member of the newly formed society, to attend to the preparation of the insignia. Major L'Enfant accepted the task, and on June 10, 1783, wrote from Philadelphia to General the Baron de Steuben inclosing drawings of the proposed medal, which, he suggested, be not smaller than a dollar, on account of the details of the design. He added, however, that he did not consider a medal appropriate as the badge of membership in the Cincinnati, medals being in Europe the rewards of artists, artisans, or the emblems of religious bodies, so that there might be confusion with such worthies, should the Cincinnati persist in wearing a medal. On the other hand, the bald eagle, a bird peculiar to this continent, might better be adopted as the Order's emblem. Major L'Enfant also sent in two designs of eagles, each drawn in keeping with his suggestion and at the same time embodying the emblems on the approved design for the medal. It was one of these designs which was adopted as the insignia of the Cincinnati, the well-known Eagle. The Eagle bears on its breast a medallion on which, enameled in colors, are the emblems designed for the medal, namely Cincinnatus being presented with the sword by the Senators, etc. Grasped in the Eagle's talons are golden olive branches, and above its head an olive wreath by which it is suspended from the ribbon. This is of watered silk, sky-blue edged with white. There seems to have been some confusion as to the interpretation of the words of the institution, to the effect that the ribbon should be of "deep blue." On one occasion a number of Eagles were prepared with a ribbon of dark blue, but apparently the term

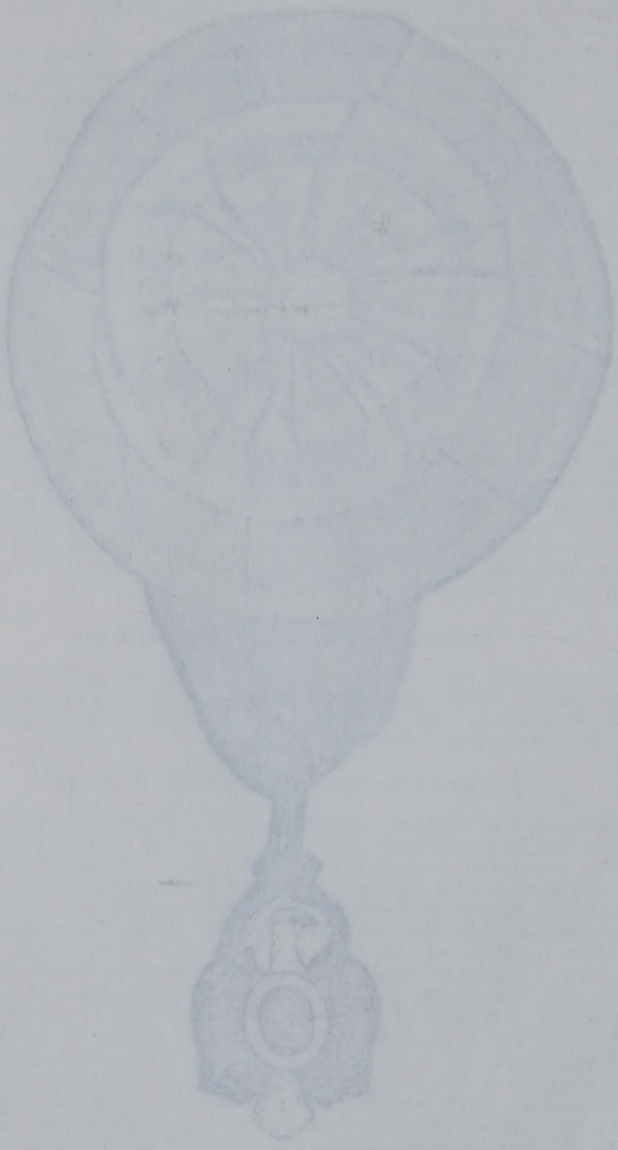
"deep blue" was used in the eighteenth century to mean what we now call sky blue. All of the original Eagles are suspended from ribbons of this color.



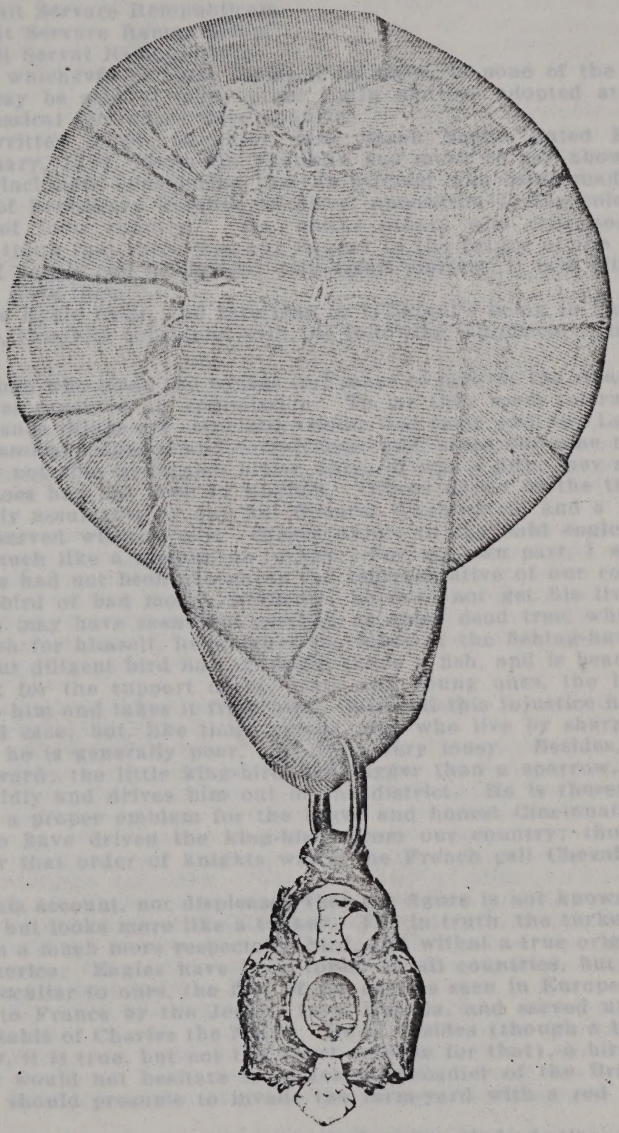
General Washington's Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Obverse. Purchased by him in 1783 and worn until he was presented with the diamond Eagle. (Reproduced by permission of the present owner, Mr. Asa Bird Gardiner, of Baltimore.)

Major L'Enfant was commissioned by President-General Washington on October 29, 1783, to proceed to Paris to supervise the fabrication of the Eagles. L'Enfant arrived in Havre on the packet ship *Washington* on December 8, 1783, and proceeded immediately to Paris.



Major L'Enfant made water-color sketches of his design for the Eagle for each of the State Societies, the copy endorsed by him, "Copy of the badge for Gen. Weedon" was sent to Brigadier-General George Weedon, first



General Washington's Eagle of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Reverse. Purchased by him in 1783 and worn until he was presented with the diamond Eagle. (Reproduced by permission of the present owner, Mr. Asa Bird Gardiner, of Baltimore.)

President of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia. It is now the property of Dr. William Sturgis Thomas, President of the New York State Society of the Cincinnati, who has kindly permitted its reproduction here.

Compared with the designs of the orders of various countries, and of the insignia of the many hereditary societies which have been patterned after the Cincinnati, the Eagle designed by Major L'Enfant is a beautiful decoration indeed. It has, however, come in for certain criticisms. Much has been written about the Latin motto. It has been variously rendered as:

Omnia Relinquit Servare Rempublicam
Omnia Reliquit Servare Rempublicam
Omnia Reliquit Servat Rempublicam

The Latin, in whichever of these forms it be given, is none of the best, but the same may be said of many other Latin mottoes adopted at that period, when classical references were popular.

In a letter written to his daughter, Mrs. Sarah Bache, dated Passy, France, 26 January, 1784, Benjamin Franklin has much to say about the Society of the Cincinnati, considering that an attempt was being made "to form an order of **hereditary knights**, in direct opposition to the solemnly declared sense of their country." He, unlike others who criticized the Society, did not think that there was any danger to the future of the country, and that "if people can be pleased with small matters, it is a pity but that they should have them."

Respecting the Eagle itself, and referring to L'Enfant's being in Paris to have them made, Franklin continued with the following whimsical remarks:

> The gentleman who made the voyage to France to provide the ribands and medals has executed his commission. To me they seem tolerably done; but all such things are criticized. Some find fault with the Latin as wanting classical elegance and correctness; and, since our nine universities were not able to furnish better Latin, it was a pity, they say, that the mottoes had not been in English. Others object to the title, as not properly assumable by any but General Washington, and a few others, who served without pay. Others object to the **bald eagle** as looking too much like a **dindon**, or turkey. For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing-hawk; and, when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him. With all this injustice he is never in good case; but, like those among men who live by sharping and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank coward; the little king-bird, not bigger than a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America, who have driven the **king-birds** from our country; though exactly fit for that order of knights which the French call **Chevaliers d'Industrie.**
>
> I am, on this account, not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours, the first of the species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada, and served up at the wedding table of Charles the Ninth. He is, besides (though a little vain and silly, it is true, but not the worst emblem for that), a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British Guards, who should presume to invade the farm-yard with a **red** coat on.
>
> I shall not enter into the criticisms made upon their Latin. The gallant officers of America may not have the merit of being great scholars, but they undoubtedly merit much, as brave soldiers from their country, which should not leave merely to **fame** for their **"virtutis premium,"** which is one of their Latin mottoes. Their **"esto perpetua,"** another, is an excellent wish, if they meant it for their country; bad, if intended for their Order. The States should not only restore to them the **omnia** of their first mottoe, which many of them have left and lost, but pay them justly, and reward them generously. . . .

It must be added, however, that for all Franklin's merriment at the expense of the Society, he came to realize its worth and on July 7, 1789, became an honorary member of the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati.

In France the Order of the Cincinnati met with immediate success. On December 25, 1783, Lafayette wrote to Washington that "at a King's Council, this day was a week, it has been decided Count de Rochambeau, his generals and colonels, and who of the admirals should be permitted to wear the Order, and a very proper letter upon the subject has been written by Maréchal de Ségur to M. de Rochambeau."

"No foreign badge but the Golden Fleece is permitted to Frenchmen in this service. From the distinction shown to our Society, and the testimony it bears of having acted a part in the war, our badge is highly wished and warmly contended for by all those who hope to have some claim on it."

On the same day Major L'Enfant wrote to Major-General the Baron de Steuben and said:

> It is with the greatest satisfaction that I acquaint you with the success of the Cincinnati in France. . . . His Majesty, desirous of giving to the Americans a proof of the friendship which he wishes to maintain with them, in his Council, has permitted his officers to wear this badge with the other Orders of his kingdom. . . . Here in France they are more ambitious to obtain the Order of the Cincinnati than to be decorated with the Cross of Saint-Louis.

Having secured the Eagles of the Cincinnati in Paris, Major L'Enfant returned to America bringing them to the Society for distribution to the members. At the meeting of May 17, 1784, the minutes contain the following entry:

> Major L'Enfant having produced his account for his agency in France:
> **Ordered,** That a draught be given on Major-General McDougall, late treasurer-general for the Society, for the sum of six hundred and thirty dollars to be paid to Major L'Enfant as the balance of his account.
> Major L'Enfant was thanked for having executed his charge with such care and attention. Thereafter the Eagles were distributed by the Assistant Secretary-General of the Order.

General Washington procured not only one of the Eagles for himself, but also six for his principal aides-de-camp.

There came a time, however, when the possession of the coveted Eagle in France became a great danger, and might consign the bearer to the scaffold. In September, 1792, a number of political prisoners, including the venerable Duc de Brissac and other persons of distinction, were ordered to be transported, under escort, from Orléans to Paris. Seven wagons, each containing eight prisoners loaded with chains, set out on the fatal journey, headed by Fourmier, a renegade American. "From the neck of Fourmier's horse," says Lamartine, in his History of the Girondins, "dangled a collar composed of Crosses of St. Louis, Eagles of Cincinnatus, and other military decorations snatched from the breasts of the victims." Arrived at the gates of Versailles, they were attacked by a mob of assassins that lay in waiting, and savagely butchered in cold blood.

On February 24, 1784, the officers of the French Navy who had been admitted to the Order of the Cincinnati, presented General Washington, through His Excellency the Count d'Estaing, the ranking Naval officer, with the Eagle of the Cincinnati richly set in diamonds. The Eagle was sent via the packet ship *Washington*, with the following letter of transmittal:

> Paris, 26th February, 1784.
>
> Sir: It is in the name of all the French Navy that I take the liberty to request Your Excellency to accept an American Eagle, expressed rather than embellished by a French artist.
>
> Liberty (of which it is the happy and august symbol) has risen of itself, supported by wisdom, talents and disinterestedness; by every virtue; by General Washington. Obstacles have only served to increase its strength.
>
> The efforts of a patriotic army were irresistable when seconded by the King's troops, who have shown themselves by their discipline and

It must be added, however, that for all Franklin's excitement at the escape of the convict, he came in resting his words and on July 7, 1784, became an honorary member of the Fonderyeans Society of the Cincinnati.

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"No foreign ladies but the Indian Princes is permitted to Participate in this sorrow. From the distinction shown to our Society, and the testimony it bears of having a part in the war, our badge is highly valued and warmly contended for by all those who hope to have some claim on it."

On the same day Major L'Enfant wrote to Major-General the Baron de Steuben and said:

> It is with the greatest satisfaction that I congratulate you with the success of the Cincinnati in Prussia. His Majesty, desirous of signalizing to the Americans a proof of the friendship which he wishes to maintain with them, in his Council, has permitted his officers to wear this badge with the other Orders of his kingdom. . . . Here in France they are more ambitious to obtain the Order of the Cincinnati than to be decorated with the Cross of Saint-Louis.

Having secured the Badge of the Cincinnati in Paris, Major L'Enfant returned to America bringing them to the Society for distribution to the members. At the meeting of May 12, 1784, the minutes contain the following entry:

> Major L'Enfant having produced his account for his agency in procuring Orders, That a draught be given on Major-General McDougall, Treasurer-general for the Society, for the sum of six hundred and thirty dollars to be paid to Major L'Enfant as the balance of his account.
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On February 24, 1783, the officers of the French Navy who had been admitted to the Order of the Cincinnati, presented General Washington through His Excellency the Count d'Estaing, the ranking Naval officer, with the Badge of the Cincinnati richly set in diamonds. The Badge was sent via the packet ship Marianne, with the following letter of transmittal:

> Paris, 28th February, 1784.
>
> Sir: It is in the name of all the French Navy that I take the liberty to request Your Excellency to accept an American Eagle, expressed rather than embellished by a French artist.
>
> Liberty (of which it is the happy and unique symbol) has risen of itself, supported by wisdom, talents and disinterestedness, by every virtue, by General Washington. Obstacles have only served to increase its strength.
>
> The efforts of a puissant army were irresistible when seconded by the King's troops, who have shown themselves by their discipline and

conduct worthy of the choice of his Majesty. Those with his navy made everything possible.

It appears, then, to be proper in one of those who unites the titles of soldier and sailor, and whom you inspire with the sentiments of the most profound admiration and attachment, to entreat you to receive with indulgence an homage which must cease to be unimportant when it shall appeal to your sensibility.

One who has had the happiness to be the first of those whom the King sent to America, and who has been the last of those who were designed to lead thither the forces of two great monarchs, thereby acquiring the happy prerogative of being entitled to express, though faintly, the sentiments of all his fellow sailors and soldiers.

I have the honor to be, with respect, sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient and
Most humble servant,

ESTAING.

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Washington received the diamond Eagle on May 11, 1784, while attending the sessions of the General Society at Philadelphia. Appropriate acknowledgment was made on the 15th of May, in which the President-General wrote that he would thenceforth wear this Order instead of his own.

In the inventory of the property at Mount Vernon at Washington's death, there are mentioned "three gold Cincinnati Eagles" valued at $30, and "one diamond Eagle" valued at $387.

As desired by Mrs. Washington, the diamond Eagle was sent by his heirs to Major-General Alexander Hamilton, his successor in the office of President-General. Upon the tragic death of Hamilton on July 12, 1804, the diamond Eagle was transmitted by his widow to the third President-General, Major-General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. At the Triennial Meeting of the Cincinnati in Philadelphia on August 8, 1811, General Pinckney presented a memorandum,

> That the diamond insignia of the Order of the Cincinnati which had been presented by the marine officers of France, who were members of the Society, to His Excellency General Washington—and by the heirs of the General had been sent to General Hamilton, delivered to him [General Pinckney] by Mrs. Hamilton—and as he conceived that this testimonial of respect for the immortal Washington, which his heirs had delivered to General Hamilton, and Mrs. Hamilton had been pleased to confide to him, as President-General of the Society, ought, in respectful remembrance of her flattering distinction, to be hereafter considered as appurtenant to the office of President-General, he requested that this memorandum might be inserted on the records of the General Society.

The General Society thereupon resolved that the "respectful and affectionate thanks of the General Society of the Cincinnati be presented to Mrs. Hamilton for this highly acceptable present; and that the wish of the President-General, expressed in his memorandum, is respectfully acceded by the Society."

The diamond Eagle has been worn by each of the twelve men who have held the office of President-General of the Society of the Cincinnati, and it is not too much to say that it is the most valuable relic of Washington in existence. It is now held for the Society by three Trustees, the President-General, the Secretary-General and the Treasurer-General, and is worn on such occasions as the President-General may deem proper.

The diamond Eagle conforms to the pattern of the other Eagles made in France in the first year of the Society's existence, except that it is attached to the ribbon by means of a trophy of crossed cannon and flags and suspended from a loop set with diamonds. The legend on the obverse is: **Omnia Relinqt. Servat Rempb.** That on the reverse is: **Virt. Præm. Soci. Cin. rum, Inst. A. D. 1783. x.** The green and red of the wreath above the eagle's head are set in emeralds and rubies. The design contains four diamonds of about one-and-a-half carat size and five of about one carat, besides which there are eight slightly smaller stones, and numerous diamonds of assorted sizes to make up the design. The central medallion is enameled in brilliant colors. The reverse of the trophy bears a white enam-

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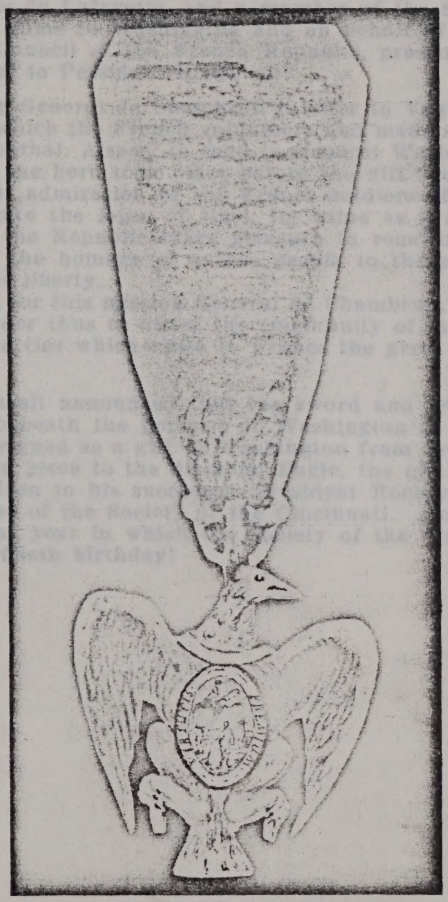
eled scroll on which in black letters are the words: **D[ ]d in the Name of the french saillors to His Excellency the General Washington.** The first word is partly chipped away but may have been **Donated**, probably the translator's term for **Donné**. The original ribbon is still attached, being undimmed in brilliancy. The fastening is a bar of gold designed to pass through the button hole of the coat and engage in a gold ring. Nearly all of the original Eagles were fastened in this manner, though some have a large rosette of the Order's ribbon.



Major L'Enfant's Sketch of the Eagle of the Cincinnati.

Copies of this sketch were presented to each of the thirteen branch Societies. This copy was sent to Brigadier General George Weedon, first President of the Virginia Society. (Reproduced by permission of the present owner, Dr. William Sturgis Thomas, President of the New York Society of the Cincinnati.)

The Eagle is kept in the original red morocco case of somewhat triangular shape and large enough to contain the Order with the ribbon folded in half.

The plain gold Eagle bought by Washington for his own use has likewise come down to us and a photograph of it is given for comparison with the diamond Eagle and to show the design of the Order as fabricated under L'Enfant's supervision. Since the Eagles were largely made by hand, there exist many varieties. Later, when dies were cut, there was even wider

variation and perhaps as many as twenty different patterns have been in use. A study of the various Eagles is now being made by an accepted authority, Captain William Lithgow Willey, Vice-President of the New Hampshire Society of the Cincinnati.

In this account of General Washington's diamond Eagle of the Order of the Cincinnati it is not without interest to mention a recent presentation to the President of the United States of a sabre which had been made as a gift to Washington from the French soldiers who had served in America during the War of Independence.

On October 10, 1933, General the Count de Chambrun, great-great-grandson of the Marquis de Lafayette, and a member of the Society of the Cincinnati in France, came to Washington and on behalf of Premier Deladier, President of the Council of the French Republic, presented the sabre and the following letter to President Roosevelt:

> I am charging General de Chambrun to offer to Your Excellency the sabre of honor which the French volunteers had made at the celebrated works at Klingenthal, Alsace, to send to General Washington.
>
> The death of the hero took place before the gift could be sent him, but the token of admiration of the French soldiers of the Revolution still keeps, despite the lapse of time, its value as a symbol, and the Government of the Republic takes pleasure in renewing, to Washington's successor, the homage of a free people to the noblest figure of the struggles for liberty.
>
> I have chosen for this mission General de Chambrun, a descendant of Lafayette, in order thus to attest the community of memories and the continuity of the ties which unite to France the great Republic of the United States.

President Roosevelt announced that the sword and letter of transmittal would be placed beneath the portrait of Washington at the White House. Thus the sabre designed as a gift to Washington from French soldiers, in a way the companion piece to the diamond Eagle, the gift of French sailors, is most happily given to his successor, President Roosevelt, the most eminent living member of the Society of the Cincinnati. How fitting that this should occur in the year in which the Society of the Cincinnati celebrates its hundred and fiftieth birthday!

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